

FEBRUARY 25, 2021

**SUMMARY:**

**1. New Cases:** DPH new cases reported yesterday:

**Barnstable County:** 48 new cases  
**Martha's Vineyard:** 9 new cases  
**Nantucket:** 0 new cases.

**2. Hospitalizations and Fatalities:** 3-day avg. hospitalizations have fallen to 17 (were in the mid-60s last month ago). ICU patient numbers have fallen as well; 3 patients were in the ICUs last night. There have been 9 COVID fatalities reported since Saturday (inclusive); 3 fatalities were reported yesterday.

Recent data on COVID fatalities in Barnstable County suggest that residents of **Long Term Care/Skilled Nursing Facilities/Rest Homes** represent 45% of all fatalities (166 of 368 fatalities, as of 2/11/21). This is a **lower** percentage than that seen during phase 1 of the pandemic last spring (over 65%), and **this percentage continues to fall. Indeed, between 1/5/21 and 2/11/21 only 24% (27) of the County's 112 fatalities occurred among LTC residents.**

**3. Schools and Childcare Centers:** Due to the mildness of the flu season the DPH has **removed the requirement** that all school children receive a flu vaccination on or before 2/28/21. **School districts remain in a hybrid learning model.**

**4. Testing; Test Positivity Rates** (14-day, as of 2/16/21):

**Barnstable County:** 3.68%  
**Dukes & Nantucket Counties:** 3.38%

A test percent positivity rate below 5% suggests that an outbreak is on the way to **containment.**

**5. Weekly Town Risk, and Statewide Cluster Analyses:** See charts below.

**6. Vaccination:**

-Groups eligible for vaccination now are those in Phase 1, and Phase 2/Group 1 (persons aged 75+), and Phase 2/Group 2 (65+, 2+ comorbidities, residents and staff of low-income senior housing) depending upon availability of vaccine.

**Caregivers (regardless of age) accompanying a 75+ person to their vaccination appointment remain eligible for vaccination.**

-Planning for 4-5 sub-regional mass vaccination sites on Cape Cod, for operation during Phase 2, is in place.

-DPH discussions with the County's **legislative delegation** to open a vaccination site(s) on Cape Cod with **adequate supplies of vaccine** are underway.

-Phase 2 of the State Vaccination Plan began on February 1. Vaccination at local clinics during Phase 2 are by appointment only and **appointments are announced and able to be scheduled once County and local health authorities are sure of vaccine availability from the DPH.** The public is being given notice of planned vaccination clinics for eligible persons in Phase 2.

**7. COVID Mutation and Changes in Transmissibility/Virulence/Other: There are four variants of concern: B117 (UK), B1351 (S. Africa), P1 (Brazil), and now B1526 (New York City) which.** B1526 (NYC) emerged in November. All appear to be significantly more transmissible than the virus which dominated Wave 1 of the pandemic. Within two months of the B117 variant being identified in the UK (October) it became the dominant strain circulating there. The CDC is now posting surveillance information on the emergence of the B117 variant in the US: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant-cases.html>.

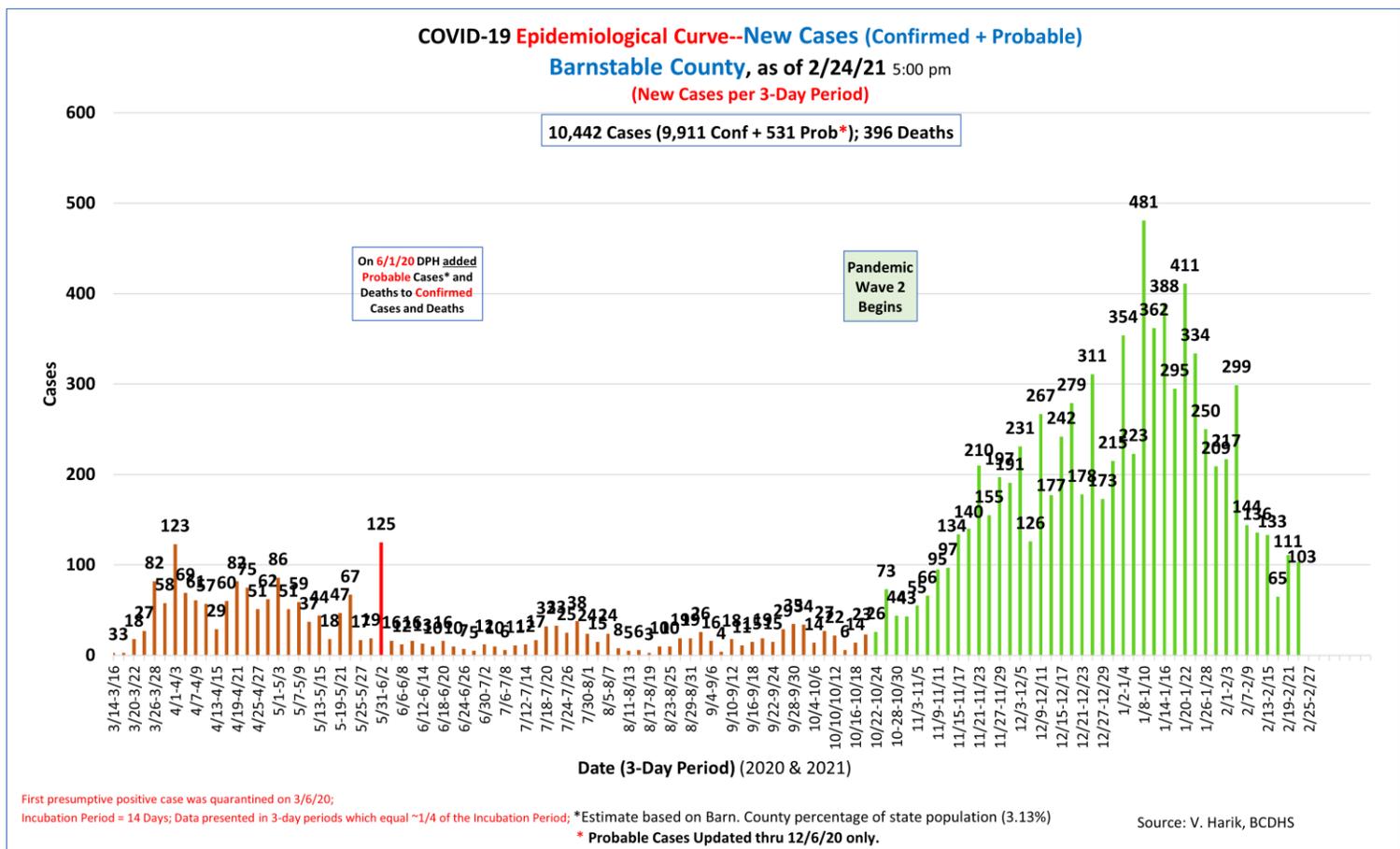
Existing vaccines may be less effective against these new strains. The degree to which this may be so is being investigated. Moderna and Pfizer are working on a booster shot to counter these new strains.

**-B117 and B1351 have been identified in Massachusetts.**

**DETAIL:**

**1. New Cases**

Daily new case numbers in Barnstable County remain in a downward trend following the holiday season surge. **48** cases were reported yesterday. The 7-day average new cases per 100,000 (now **16/100K**) has risen slightly this week, with Barnstable County acquiring an **average of 35 cases per day over the past 7 days**.



**Nantucket's 7-day average cases per 100,000 population** (now **15/100K**) continues trending lower; Nantucket is picking up approximately **2** new cases per day. **0** new cases were reported yesterday.

**Martha's Vineyard's 7-day average cases per 100,000 population** (now **22/100K**) has risen this week. Dukes County is gaining approximately **4** new cases per day. **9** case were reported by the DPH yesterday.

**Trailing 14-Day Testing and Cases by County:**

In the context of adequate availability of testing and contact tracing, which our three counties appear to have achieved, a **test percent positivity rate below 5%** suggests that an **outbreak is on the way to containment**. Rates below 3% and 1% are further important containment milestones.

**Test Positivity Rates (14-day, as of 2/16/21):**

Barnstable County: 3.68%  
 Dukes & Nantucket Counties: 3.38%

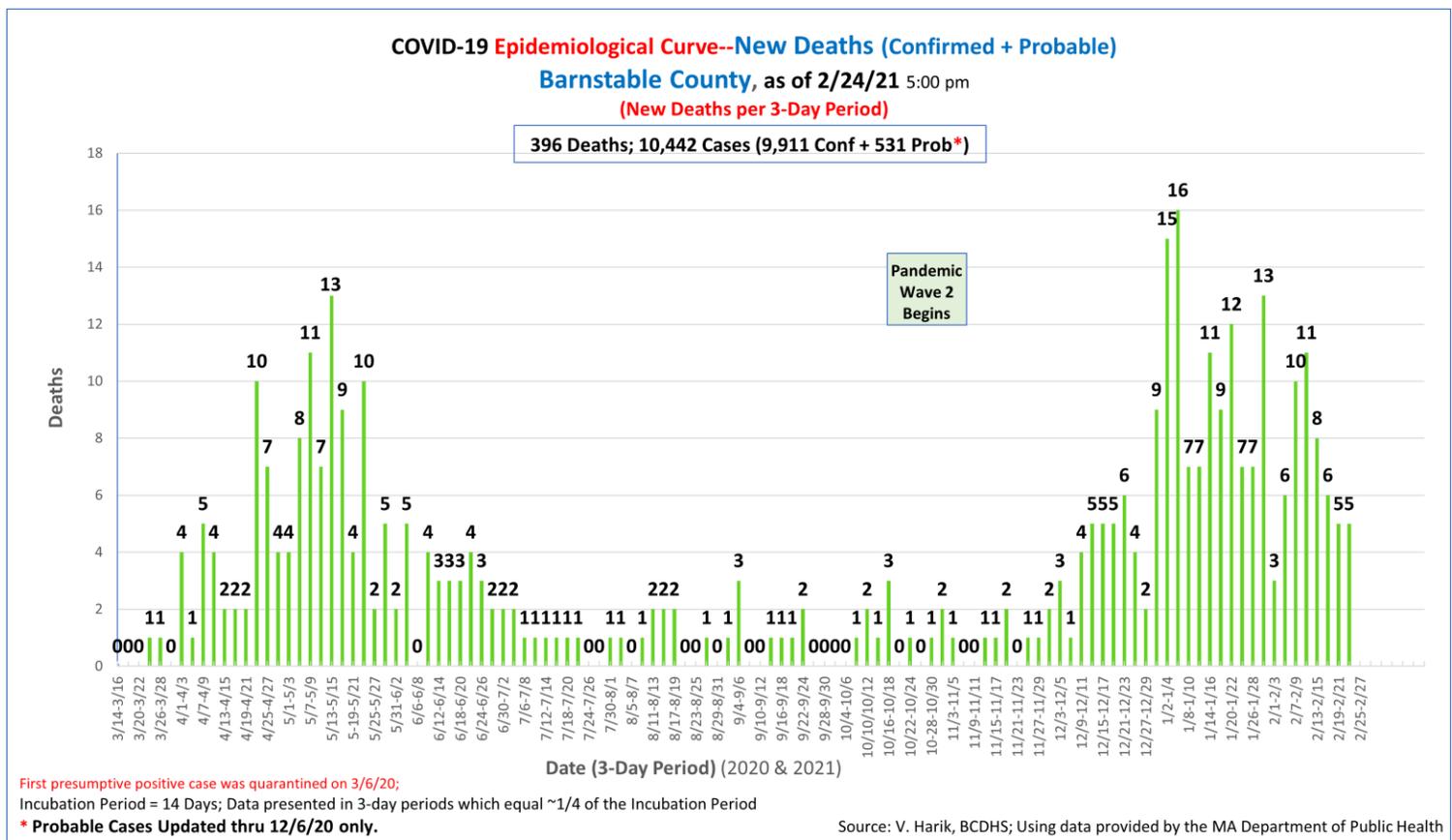
**2. Hospitalizations and Fatalities**

**Hospitalizations and acuity of illness** have increased very significantly since the second week of November and remain elevated. Cape Cod Hospital and Falmouth Hospital have **suspended visitation** of inpatients except under very limited circumstances (end-of-life, etc.) and have **stopped non-essential surgeries and other elective procedures**.

<b>Hospitalizations, Last Report:</b>		<b>Not Cumulative</b>		<b>Cumulative</b>		3-Day Avg. of Persons in Hosp. (Med/Surg + ICU)	ICU Percent of Beds Occupied
		Hospital Beds Occupied (Last Report)	ICU Beds Occupied (Last Report)	Barnstable County Cases (Confirmed)	Barnstable County Deaths		
<b>2/24/2021</b>	Cape Cod Hospital	14	2				
	Falmouth Hospital	3	1				
		<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9,911</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>15%</b>

Since DPH reporting of hospitalizations has a 2-day lag Tina Shaw of CCHC is providing me with more recent information (thank you Tina). Yesterday evening CCHC reported that there were **20 COVID patients in hospital**, **3** of which were in the **ICUs**.

**Fatalities: 3** additional fatalities were reported yesterday. The total is now **396**.



Recent data on COVID fatalities in Barnstable County suggest that residents of **Long Term Care/Skilled Nursing Facilities/Rest Homes** represent **45%** of all fatalities (166 of 368 fatalities, as of 2/11/21). This is a **lower** percentage than that seen during phase 1 of the pandemic last spring (over 65%), and **this percentage continues to fall. Indeed, between 1/5/21 and 2/11/21 only 24% of the County's 106 fatalities occurred among LTC residents.**

### **3. Schools and Childcare Centers**

**School districts** are staying vigilant and reacting well to new cases. Most school districts on the Cape and Islands are in a hybrid learning status.

DESE and the DPH (memo of 1/8/21) announced that they are seeking to introduce COVID-19 screening testing using a pooled strategy in the school setting. Schools may elect to participate by responding to a survey that DESE/DPH have posted. The status of this initiative is unclear at this time.

~~For the 2020-2021 school year the DPH has mandated that all school children be vaccinated for seasonal influenza. This week the DPH extended the deadline for doing so from 12/31/20 to 2/28/21. This mandate has been canceled by the DPH.~~

During Phase 2 of the state vaccination rollout **childcare center** staff are to be vaccinated alongside school staff.

### **4. Testing**

Additional testing locations in Barnstable County for both symptomatic and asymptomatic persons remain open in **Falmouth** at the Fairgrounds and in **Hyannis** at Cape Cod Hospital (the Melody Tent site has been given over to vaccination clinics). Daily testing capacity is 50 at the Falmouth site and 350 at the Hyannis site. Neither site is open daily and persons must call ahead for an appointment. Details: <https://www.capecodhealth.org/medical-services/infectious-disease/coronavirus/covid-19-testing-process/>.

In late December additional testing by **Outer Cape Community Health Services** began and continues at its 3 locations in Wellfleet, Harwich Port, and Provincetown (<https://outercapex.org/2020/12/23/outercapex-health-services-to-offer-covid-19-asymptomatic-testing-beginning-december-23/>). The **Community Health Center of Cape Cod** is also offering testing at its locations. These sites may not open be daily and persons must call ahead for an appointment.

Eligibility criteria for the testing include residency in Barnstable County. Testing is done by appointment only. Tests cost \$75, \$110 for travel-related tests, and no one will be turned away if unable to pay for a test.

DPH-mandated **routine testing** in skilled nursing facilities/long term care settings (SNF/LTC) continues. This provides critical surveillance and allows these facilities to stay ahead of asymptomatic spread amongst staff and residents. Routine testing in SNF/LTC settings is conducted weekly for staff.

In addition, the State's **BinaxNOW rapid testing program** (available to **schools**) has been extended to visitors of **nursing homes** and rest home residents (LTC settings) to allow visitation of residents while limiting the risk of infection from visitors. DPH has published guidance on this. The program has also been extended to ~~childcare centers~~ (? **Checking...**) and **homeless shelters** and management of these facilities may apply to the EEC and DPH for testing kits.

## 5. Weekly Town Risk and Statewide Cluster Analyses

MA DPH Data Dashboard, WEEKLY REPORT of 2/18/21 (for the Period 1/31/20 to 2/13/21)										
City/Town	Population	(March 2020 to Present) Total Case Count	Case Count Last 14 Days	Average Daily Incidence Rate per 100K	Relative Change in Case Count	Total Tests	Total Tests Last 14 Days	Positive Tests Last 14 Days	Percent Positivity Last 14 Days	Change in Percent Positivity
Barnstable	44,773	2,846	199	31.7	Lower	56,637	4,556	230	5.05%	Lower
Bourne	21,026	970	89	30.2	Lower	32,313	3,831	96	2.51%	Lower
Brewster	9,926	366	28	20.1	Lower	14,516	1,381	32	2.32%	Lower
Chatham	5,830	251	34	41.7	Lower	7,254	581	40	6.88%	Lower
Dennis	13,088	537	34	18.6	Lower	14,995	1,362	43	3.16%	Lower
Eastham	4,603	108	18	27.9	Lower	3,964	338	22	6.51%	Lower
Falmouth	31,190	1,133	51	11.7	Lower	47,608	3,162	60	1.90%	Lower
Harwich	12,589	563	50	28.4	Lower	15,005	1,155	51	4.42%	Lower
Mashpee	15,535	595	66	30.3	Lower	19,536	1,580	72	4.56%	Lower
Orleans	5,620	238	51	64.8	Lower	5,669	579	52	8.98%	Lower
Provincetown	2,583	60	1	5.5	Lower	3,975	251	4	1.59%	Higher
Sandwich	21,078	834	51	17.3	Lower	22,936	1,660	60	3.61%	Lower
Truro	1,968	38	6	21.8	Lower	1,754	115	6	5.22%	Lower
Wellfleet	2,760	52	1	7.8	Lower	2,514	168	3	1.79%	Lower
Yarmouth	24,062	1,074	73	21.7	Lower	30,840	2,459	82	3.33%	No Change
<b>Barnstable County</b>	<b>216,629</b>	<b>9,665</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>Lower</b>	<b>279,516</b>	<b>23,178</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>3.68%</b>	<b>Lower</b>
Aquinnah	261	0	0	0	No Change	488	23	0	0	No Change
Chilmark	759	14	1	9.4	Higher	3,198	124	1	0.81%	Higher
Edgartown	4,086	247	12	21.0	Lower	10,138	561	12	2.14%	Lower
Gosnold	45	5	0	0	No Change	122	2	0	0	No Change
Oak Bluffs	5,209	217	12	16.5	Lower	6,864	356	16	4.49%	Lower
Tisbury	4,174	261	24	41.1	Higher	12,822	759	27	3.56%	Higher
West Tisbury	2,871	88	6	14.9	No Change	4,513	227	6	2.64%	Higher
<b>Dukes County</b>	<b>17,404</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>Lower</b>	<b>38,145</b>	<b>2,052</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>3.02%</b>	<b>Lower</b>
Nantucket	11,416	1,140	52	32.5	Lower	21,237	1,437	56	3.90%	Lower
<b>Dukes and Nantucket Counties</b>	<b>28,820</b>	<b>1,976</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>Lower</b>	<b>59,382</b>	<b>3,489</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>3.38%</b>	<b>Lower</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>6,964,383</b>	<b>533,024</b>	<b>29,269</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>Lower</b>	<b>15,140,864</b>	<b>1,261,833</b>	<b>34,108</b>	<b>2.70%</b>	<b>Lower</b>

Data Source: MA DPH, 2/18/21 Weekly COVID Report (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting>); Analysis: V. Harik BCDHS.

### Massachusetts COVID Testing Rates, As Applied to Barnstable County (Thru 2/16/21)

Sources: Census.gov; MA DPH Weekly COVID Report, 2/11/21. Analysis: V. Harik, BCDHS

	MA	Barnstable County
Population Estimate (via DPH)	6,964,383	216,629
	<b>Barnstable County % of MA Pop.</b>	<b>3.11%</b>
	Barn. County % of Total MA Tests	1.85%
	<b>Barn. County % of MA Tests, Past Two Weeks</b>	<b>1.84%</b>
	Barn. County % of MA <u>Total</u> Confirmed Cases	1.81%
	<b>Barn. County % of MA Confirmed Cases, Past Two Weeks</b>	<b>2.57%</b>
	MA % Positive Tests Last 14 Days	2.70%
	<b>Barnstable County % Positive Tests Last 14 Days</b>	<b>3.68%</b>

## Active COVID Clusters by Exposure Setting Type for the Period 1/17/20 to 2/3/21 (as of 2/18/21)

Source: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting>. Tabulation: V. Harik, Barnstable County DHS

Sorted by Number of Cases in New Cluster Settings

	Exposure Setting	New Clusters (Identified 1/17/21 – 2/13/21)			Ongoing Clusters (Meeting Criteria for Closing)			Total		
		Clusters	Confirmed Cases	Close Contacts	Clusters	Confirmed Cases	Close Contacts	Clusters	Confirmed Cases	Close Contacts
1	Household	11,645	29,691	---	30,973	6,827	---	42,618	36,518	---
2	Child Care	93	277	473	284	196	305	377	473	778
3	Colleges & Universities	39	256	76	10	26	1	49	282	77
4	Long Term Care Facilities	38	169	---	245	1,418	---	283	1,587	---
5	Organized Athletics/Camps	38	169	272	47	28	116	85	197	388
6	Senior Living	16	93	7	144	271	37	160	364	44
7	K-12 Schools	18	72	117	36	91	99	54	163	216
8	24/7 Congregate Settings	19	63	16	95	52	19	114	115	35
9	Social Gatherings	8	58	6	49	4	14	57	62	20
10	Recreation/Cultural	5	42	.	6	38	5	11	80	5

### 6. Vaccination

Groups eligible for vaccination now are those in Phase 1, Phase 2/Group 1 (persons aged 75+), and Phase 2/Group 2 (65+, 2+ comorbidities, and residents and staff of low-income senior housing) depending upon availability of vaccine. Caregivers (regardless of age) accompanying a 75+ person to their vaccination appointment remain eligible for vaccination.

Appointments (<https://www.cic-health.com/vaccines-location>) may not be immediately available due to overwhelming demand and still-limited supply of vaccine from the manufacturers. Appointments for local vaccination clinics are only being scheduled once County and local health authorities can be sure of vaccine availability from the DPH. The public is being given notice of planned vaccination clinics for eligible persons in Phase 2.

Vaccination is available at several State-run mass vaccination sites around Massachusetts. The closest ones to Cape Cod are at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro and in Dartmouth. Appointments can be scheduled by visiting <https://www.cic-health.com/vaccines-location>, or calling 2-1-1 and following the prompts.

Plans for regional vaccination clinics on Cape Cod are ready and a few clinics have already been advertised and held. County Planners are awaiting sufficient vaccine supply before expanding local clinics. The public receives 24-hour advance notice before appointments for local clinics are made available online.

DPH discussions with the County's legislative delegation to open a mass vaccination site on Cape Cod with adequate supplies of vaccine are underway.

Childcare staff will be eligible for vaccination alongside school staff in Phase 2.

The State has contracted with CVS and Walgreens to arrange vaccination of older adults in SNFs/congregate care. CVS, Walgreens, and Stop & Shop pharmacies are also scheduling vaccinations for the groups in Phase 2, again depending upon vaccine supply.

## COVID-19 Vaccination in MA: Phase 1 & 2 Eligibility Status

### Phase 1

All phase 1 priority groups

Now eligible

### Phase 2

1

Individuals age 75+

Now eligible

2

Individuals 65+ and individuals with 2+ certain medical conditions

Now eligible

3

Early education and K-12 workers, transit, grocery, utility, food and agriculture, sanitation, public works, and public health workers

Not yet eligible

4

Individuals with 1 certain medical condition

Not yet eligible

### 7. COVID Mutation and Changes in Transmissibility/Virulence/Other

The emergence of a variant of the COVID-19 virus in the UK, classified as B.1.1.7, was identified in September and publicized in early December. Reports hold that B117 is 50% - 70% more contagious than our predominant variant now circulating (D614G). Within three months of the variant being identified in the UK it became dominant strain circulating there. Additional variants of concern have emerged internationally: B1351 (South Africa) and Brazil (P1) which are also highly transmissible. **An additional variant, B1526, emerged in New York City in November. Its features are being studied.**

All variants appear to be significantly more transmissible than the virus which dominated Wave 1 of the pandemic.

**The first three variants are spreading globally and have been detected in the US.**

**The B117 and B1351 variants have been identified by the DPH as being in circulation in MA.**

Researchers are working to determine if the variants differ from D614G (the Wave 1 configuration) in terms of: **1.** How sick people become, **2.** If natural immunity is different following infection with D614G, and **3.** If immunity from vaccination differs since the vaccine was developed during the period that D614G has been predominant. **The existing vaccines may be less effective against the new strains. Moderna and Pfizer are working on booster shots to counter these new strains.**

The CDC is posting surveillance information on the emergence of the variants in the US: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant-cases.html>.

According to an article by Andrew Joseph from StatNews, "Coronaviruses evolve more slowly than viruses like flu, but they do pick up mutations as they spread. **SARS-CoV-2 has been adding one or two changes a month to its RNA genome since it emerged late last year in China**, and different versions of the virus have been continuously circulating throughout the course of the pandemic. **But this variant (B.1.1.7 or VUI-202012/01) showed up with at least 17 mutations**, according to one genetic analysis."

(Source: [https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/21/looming-questions-new-variant-coronavirus/?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=1a74bda2ca-MR\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-1a74bda2ca-150158417](https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/21/looming-questions-new-variant-coronavirus/?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=1a74bda2ca-MR_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-1a74bda2ca-150158417)).

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